

**CITY OF FRIDLEY**  
**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING – MARCH 7, 2016**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairperson Heintz called the March 7, 2016 Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Members Present: Mike Heintz, Michele Barrett, Shanna Larson

Others Present: Jack Kirk, Parks and Recreation Director  
Mike Maher, Springbrook Nature Center Director  
Malcolm Mitchell, Springbrook Nature Center Foundation

**APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 1, 2016 PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES**

MOTION by Ms. Barrett, seconded by Ms. Larson to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2016 meeting.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL MEMBERS VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON HEINTZ DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

**APPROVAL OF PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA FOR MARCH 7, 2016**

MOTION by Ms. Larson, seconded by Ms. Barrett, to approve the agenda for the March 7, 2016 meeting as submitted by staff.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL MEMBERS VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON HEINTZ DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

**1. STAFF REPORT**

**a. Program Update**

Mr. Kirk stated that the Program Update is included in the meeting information to give the Commission members a report on the programming over the past month. The Recreation Division hosted several Valentine's Day parties, including one at Stevenson Elementary School, one at Hayes Elementary school and two parties at the ZONE teen center. All were well attended and enjoyed by the many participants.

Mr. Kirk stated that they have started taking registrations for the Community Gardens and expect another large demand for the limited garden spaces. The gardens are usually available to the participants in early May.

Mr. Kirk stated that the Senior Program's Mardi Gras event was a big success again this year with over 100 seniors participating. Mayor Scott Lund, Councilmember Bob Barnette, Councilmember Jim Saefke and Parks and Recreation Commission member Dave Kondrick were among the many volunteers who helped make the day special for the seniors.

Mr. Kirk stated that the Senior Tax Assistance program has gone very well this year and it is helping many people with their taxes. The program is run by AARP tax volunteers and we have been averaging about 20 or more tax preparations at each session.

**b. Park Maintenance Report**

Mr. Kirk stated that the meeting packet included a report from Operations Manager for Streets and Parks Jeff Jensen about activity of the Park Maintenance division during the past month. The Parks Division has done a very good job keeping all the skating rinks and hockey rinks in good condition for most of the month of February.

The Parks maintenance staff also helped with the sediment removal project from the pond area at Springbrook Nature Center and will be replacing the old boardwalk when the project is done.

**c. Springbrook Nature Center Report**

Mr. Kirk stated that the Springbrook Nature Center building improvements and addition continues to make great progress. The geothermal wells are being drilled in the area of the parking lot. When complete, 64 wells will create a network of tubing that will use the earth's energy to heat and cool the new interpretive center. Mr. Maher is with us this evening and is going to share a number of photos of the building project.

Mr. Maher stated that the Springbrook Nature Center staff has been busy developing new classes and programs that they will roll out with the opening of the new interpretive center. These will include new activity kits and nature education classes for field trip groups.

Mr. Maher further stated that staff has been busy researching equipment and supplies for the new interpretive center. They hope to order items in the next few weeks so they arrive in time for the building opening.

Mr. Maher stated that Parsons Electric has promised a \$25,000 donation toward the audio visual equipment in the new building.

**d. Commission Appreciation Dinner – Save the Date**

Mr. Kirk stated that Mayor Lund and the Fridley City Council will be inviting the Parks and Recreation Commission members to a Commission Appreciation Dinner on Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup>. He wanted to give the Commission a save the date notice.

**2. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Softball Tournament Request – Fridley High School**

Mr. Kirk stated that Fridley High School Activities Director Dan Roff has requested the use of Fridley Community Park for a one day high school girls' softball tournament on Saturday May 7, 2016. This will be a girls' high school fast pitch invitational, with Fridley High School being the host school. Staff would recommend approval of the request by Fridley High School to use Community Park on May 7<sup>th</sup> at the one day non-profit organization rate of \$500. The School District has submitted a check for \$500 with their tournament request. It should be noted that the back two fields at Community Park (#5 and #6) will not be available due to the Met Council sewer project work in the area.

MOTION by Ms. Barrett, seconded by Ms. Larson, to approve the softball tournament request by Fridley High School to use Fridley Community Park for a one day tournament on May 7, 2016 at the regular rental rate.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL MEMBERS VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON HEINTZ DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

**b. Springbrook Nature Center – Phase 2 Improvements**

Mr. Kirk stated that the local planning team working on the Phase 2 improvements just met with Hoisington Koegler Group representatives earlier today to discuss the project. Instead of waiting another month to bring this information to the Parks and Recreation Commission, he thought it would be a good idea to share it with the members tonight. In addition to Mike Maher, Director of Springbrook Nature Center, we also have the Chairperson of the Springbrook Nature Center Foundation Malcolm Mitchell at the meeting this evening. Hoisington Koegler Group is the landscape architect firm that we are working with on the project.

Mr. Kirk stated that there are three major components to the Phase 2 improvements that they are working on at this time. The first is the landscaping package around the building perimeter. The second is the nature based children's play area and the third is the amphitheater. Other components such as a new picnic pavilion or outdoor plaza area are currently being looked at as future projects.

Mr. Kirk stated site work around the building is the most immediate need and the highest priority of the phase 2 improvements. We would like to have the site work/landscaping completed in time for a building grand opening celebration that is tentatively scheduled for the end of July.

Mr. Kirk stated that with the children's nature based play area and the amphitheater, they would hope to be in a financial position that bidding could take place in late summer. The projects could then be started in the fall.

Mr. Kirk explained the components of the site improvements-landscaping and showed the three plan options to the Commission.

Mr. Heintz asked if the plants and turf in the area around the new building will require a lot of maintenance attendance.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the plan is for low maintenance plants to be included. The rain gardens, for example, will be dry most of the time and will have plants that won't need constant attention. There will be very little turf grass in the area that will need on-going maintenance.

Mr. Kirk showed the Commission the concept plans for the nature based play area and the amphitheater. The play area will include natural elements, such as logs and twigs, as well as manufactured play equipment. The area will also likely have some boulders and a water feature, including an operable hand water pump.

Mr. Maher said the water would come out of the pump and then flow in a circular pattern on a concrete structure or possibly a sand area. It could accommodate about 15 or 20 children playing in the water pump area.

Mr. Kirk stated that this nature based play area will be significantly different than the traditional playground structures that we have in many of our parks. The traditional play areas have swings, slides, jungle gyms and climbing tubes.

Ms. Larson stated that this should become a destination play area for the people of Fridley.

Mr. Kirk stated that the amphitheater will include a multi-tiered seating area that could accommodate a 100 to 150 people. A performance area or stage area for programs would be a part of this project. The

amphitheater would be used for nature education and special events. The amphitheater would be located just east of the interpretive center.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the Springbrook Nature Center Foundation is doing the heavy lifting of raising money to make the Springbrook Nature Center SPRING project a reality. As an overview of the fundraising, the Foundation has raised about \$1,100,000 to date. That is actual cash on hand. That total includes approximately \$600,000 from businesses or other foundations, and the balance from individuals.

Mr. Mitchell further stated that the SNC Foundation has committed \$460,000 to Phase 1 of the project which is the building addition and improvements. The Foundation continues to raise money for other components of the SPRING project, including the outdoor picnic pavilion and the other features they want to include in the outdoor play area and amphitheater. As the Foundation continues its fundraising efforts, they will include looking for opportunities for in-kind donations from area businesses. The in-kind donations and promises to date amount to around \$700,000 for this SPRING project.

Motion by Ms. Larson, seconded by Ms. Barrett, to support the concept plans for Phase 2 of the Springbrook Nature Center improvements that were presented at the meeting tonight.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL MEMBERS VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON HEINTZ DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

**c. Park Service Area Study**

Mr. Kirk stated that the Park Service Area Study is an important undertaking for the staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission to help us determine future needs and improvements for our park system. While it is a big project and will take a lot of time, it will help us as we work on updating the City's comprehensive plan and put together future Parks CIP projects. This will be the third time in the past 20 years that we will be completing a park service area study.

Mr. Kirk stated that he just wanted to introduce the study this evening and has provided the most recent document in the agenda packet. He plans to bring several park area recommendations to future meetings for discussion. It may take up to a year to cover all of our city park service areas. When all the park service areas have been addressed, all of the results will be combined into a single document.

Mr. Kirk stated that he expects to start addressing individual areas at the April or May Commission meeting.

**3. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Ms. Barrett, seconded by Ms. Larson, to adjourn the March 7, 2016 meeting at 8:15 p.m.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL MEMBERS VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON HEINTZ DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED AND THE MARCH 7, 2016 MEETING ADJOURNED.